

## PICTURE MAPPING METHOD AND STORYTELLING: A WAY TO PROMOTE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Novi Yanthi, Winti Ananthia, Margaretha Sri Yuliaratiningsih

**Abstract:** Storytelling has an important role in promoting children's mental development (Davies, 2007; Gadzikowski, 2007). The use of picture in storytelling has widely recognised in EYL classroom (Rossiter, Derwing & Jones, 2008; Bonvillian and Floven, 2003). Since children aged 5-6 years old are not able to write and read yet, picture mapping method is implemented in this study following storytelling session. Picture map is used as tool for children to develop their communication and collaboration skills which are parts of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The research aimed to identify the development of 21st century skills in a storytelling activity that employed picture mapping in kindergarten classroom. The research protocols were transcribed recorded talk with students, observation documents, and video record. The results indicated that the developed 21st century skills were students' skills which is shown by the capability in: (1) communicating ideas and thoughts with the use of picture map; (2) listening effectively to the story told by the teacher; (3) responding effectively to others during storytelling sessions; (4) communicating effectively in a bilingual atmosphere, and (5) express willingness to be helpful.

**Keywords:** *picture mapping, story telling, 21st century skills, English for young learners, kindergarten in Indonesia.*

In the early childhood education, English has become area of interest, especially for awareness of the importance of English in the globalisation era. English for young learners should consider aspects of three to five years old children characteristics. Therefore, it is highly recommended to attach activities which suit the children world in the English lesson, such as listening to stories.

Storytelling is considered as an activity closely-related with children world (Brewster *et al*, 2002). Storytelling could enhance the children's imagination ability which affects their mental health (Davies, 2007; Gadzikowski, 2007; Kuyvenhoven 2009). This research investigated young language learners who were involved in storytelling activities which was equipped with the picture mapping method. This paper aims to identify the aspects of the 21st century skills which were emerged or developed in the children.

As foreign language learners, children are often believed as better learners older learners. According to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) about the first language acquisition proposed by Lenneberg (Brewster *et al*, 2002), there is a golden period in children development if they are exposed to a certain language, so a maximum result could be achieved. In addition, Brewster *et.al* (2002) remark it is because children seem to have a greater facility in understanding and imitating what they hear. Furthermore, Pinter (2006) adds that children acquire and pick up foreign language when they learn in a relaxed and fun situation, where they could build understanding from meaningful context. This can be achieved through storytelling.

### Storytelling for Children to Develop the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

Storytelling is one of the meaningful activities for children in the early childhood period (Brewster, *et.al*, 2002; Phillips, 1993; and Pinter, 2006) since the activity facilitate children's need to develop their imagination world (Gadzikowski, 2007; Kuyvenhoven, 2009). Meanwhile, McConaghy (1990) states that story time is the beginning phase when children are exposed to literature. During this activity, children could express their opinion about the story, the characters, the plot and the ideas of the story, which develop their way of thinking.

Besides the beneficial aspects, storytelling also gives positive values for children's personal character development. Previous researches have shown convincing results that through storytelling children could: 1) develop cross culture understanding, since story is culture-blended (Al-Jafar & Buzzelli, 2004; Ghosn, 2004), 2) form their identity and relate themselves to the characters of the story (Gadzikowski, 2007), 2) associate the situation in the story with their own experiences (Kuyvenhoven, 2009), 3) develop their social skill; the ability to do kindness to other people (Zeece, 2009) and themselves (Cooper, 2007).

The last beneficial aspects are closely related with the 21st century skills, the skills that the children need to be successful in the era of 21st century. According to Binkley, *et.al* (2012: p.p 17-18), successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century age lies on the capability to communicate and share thoughts to further solve complex problems together with others.

### **The Use of Picture Map in Storytelling Activity**

Picture is one of the most important elements to help children's understanding of a story. Moreover if the story is delivered in foreign language, the use of picture as visual media is inevitable (Ananthia, 2010). Meanwhile in the context of TEFL in Taiwan, Hsiu-Chih (2008) investigated the pedagogy value of children storybook in relation to the children's linguistic ability in giving meaning to the story through pictures.

Pictures in a storytelling have been used to probe the language sample of second language learners (Rossiter, Derwing and Jones, 2008). That study unleashed the fact that picture is an effective instrument to develop children's communication ability which is also a feature in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Yet, pictures that are used should be relevant with the context of the story, do not contain cultural bias, and have clarity of drawings (Rossiter, *et al.*, 2008).

There are lots of types of visual representation to help children develop their understanding of a story even to develop their story. One of the choices is the employment of pictorial representation in the form of mind map. Toni Buzan mentioned that a mind map is a graphic representation compiling variety of information as a working system which operates similarly to how the brain works and saves information in different lobes. Each lobe features pieces of information, idea or thought contribute to a complete and complex idea or information (Sprenger, 2010: 103).

Picture map can be an aid for pre-operational children in constructing concrete visualization of abstract images. Information or ideas visualization in a picture map helps children memorize things longer. According to the characteristic of kindergarten children, it was assumed that they cannot write yet, but they can do draw. In this study, mind map was developed into the use of only pictures without any words for children to draw and retell.

### **Research Methods**

This research employs 21 kindergarten students in Cibiru area, Bandung, who have similar characteristics, e.g age, prior knowledge of English. Protocols used in the study are structured observation form, field notes, and video transcript. Analysis of data is through descriptive technique to find out the aspects of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills developed during the storytelling activity that employs picture mapping.

### **Research Findings**

According to the data, we found out that children could memorise some expressions related to the story and rephrase them either during or after storytelling session. This is one of the facts that they can listen and respond effectively to the story. This might be caused by the use of pictures to help children's understanding towards the story being told to the children. Picture attracts children to concentrate on what is being told by the storyteller, so that the process became more effective. One of the response appeared was children's expression: 'Ouch! It's too hot!'. They mime the expression when saying the utterances.

In line with the above finding, it was determined that in storytelling activity, there was a situation when the children were asked to sit nicely and listen to the story. There was also a situation where they were asked to involve actively in predicting what would happen next and saying what happen in the picture. From those situations, the children learned when they have to pay attention to other people, and when they have to speak up telling other people their opinions.

Children were noisy or tend to withdrew themselves from the activities. However, after being involved in the storytelling with picture mapping activity, they know when they have to be quiet and listen to others, and when to participate actively in the activity. In understanding the politeness in a verbal interaction does not mean that the children did not have any opportunities to ask questions. Children started to know when the right time for them to ask questions to the teacher is.

Next after the storytelling process, the children were asked to draw anything that they could remember from the story titled "*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*". The children were also asked to expand the story, where they could draw new things that were not mentioned in the story. Surprisingly, they can tell the story based on the picture map they have been made bilingually. Not less than 50% children can tell a relevant plot to the story told before. For example, they mentioned new words, such as: flower, car, bus, truck, and tree. This suggested that through the use of picture map in storytelling session, children's bilingual communication skills have improved.

The storytelling activity in this reasearch has also helped the children to develop another positive character that is the awareness of being helpful to other people. The children learned the importance of sharing in achieving the goal in the learning process. They were sharing in using the stationery during the drawing process. Besides, children also participated in tidying up all of the stationaries they had used. They put all of the stuffs back to the correct places.

## Discussion of Research Findings

The steps of storytelling and picture mapping activities in this research has unleashed the fact that children developed some of 21st century skills, that is the communication and collaborations skill, as a part of learning and innovation skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). On the last day of the lesson, the children were asked to continue and make prediction about how the story of *"Goldilock and the Three Bears"* ended by drawing some pictures and adding them into their picture mapping. This activity is an opportunity for the children to share ideas with picture aid to emphasize communication (Vale & Feunteun, 2009, p.34).

The pictures that emerged from the children were: road, a bus, an airplane, a train, a doll, and a bar of chocolate. When the children told about their picture map, they were able to associate their own-created objects with the story that had been told. For example, when one of the children said that Goldilock had a daughter who had a doll and chocolate is her favourite one. Another child said that after had been waken up by the three bears, Goldilock ran away to the road and left away by bus or by train. This finding reveals that through picture map children could develop the ability to tell story by adding new insights in a fun, easy and quick way, as it is stated by Sprenger (2010, p.104).

Furthermore, Dawes emphasises that "Children need chances to express their own ideas and listen to different point of view, to talk through problems or to share ideas to create something new" (2011, p.1). By being given the opportunity to create the expansion of the story, the children communicating ideas and thought with the use of the picture map. They were also listening and responding to one another about their ideas. They exchanged ideas, which require the ability to change their minds and work flexibly. That attitude is one of the keys to the success of working collaboratively which in turn, opens another door of future success in the area of career and life skills. It is said so since the future life is always associated with more works in diverse team spanning languages and cultures (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). That interaction was built in a bilingual atmosphere; in which the key words were expressed in English, while most of the language structures were in Bahasa Indonesia. The situation shows that children's communications skills in a bilingual setting (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) were developed.

The results also indicated that picture mapping help children memorise 80-100% information they had seen or heard (Sprenger, 2010: p. 103). On accordance to it, pictorial superiority effect theory believed that pictorial aid facilitates ones to be effective listeners, which was proven here by the children's success in retelling the story. Medina stated that pictorial representation can increase recall speed from 10% to 65% (Sprenger, 2010: p.108).

In line with prior statements, Davies (2007, p.29) contends that an intensive repetition has an important role to help children internalise the whole story which in turn enables them to create the expansion of the story. The study revealed that children's listening comprehension skill is unfolded based on Shikedan's literacy competencies in early childhood (Morrow, 2007, p.68-69), namely: 1) can retell the who, what, when, and where about a story, and 2) predicts what will happen next in the story. The findings showed that the children were able to retell the story and create new ideas to be included into the story. That happened from the result that they listened effectively to the story told by the teacher.

During the process of storytelling, when the teacher invited the children to take part in the storytelling, most of them could respond with the phrases such as: *'the little baby bear'*, *'the medium mother bear'*, and *'the big father bear'*. The ability of responding to the teacher's invitation was as a result that the children listened to the teacher and their peers to comprehend the story and get and reproduce informations.

Read (2005) argues that one of the important elements in the education process is to educate children to respect the norms and rules in the society. One of them is the awareness of rights and responsibilities. In a verbal interaction, Read (2005, p.6) contends that "if you have the right to speak in the classroom and have others listen to you, then you also have the responsibility to listen to others when they do the same".

In the storytelling process, verbal interaction happened between the children and the teacher, and the children among themselves. During this activity, more often than not, some children wanted to interact at the same time, which made the class became noisy. In that situation, teacher set up rules based on the norm of how to speak politely. That condition had made the children learn about right and responsibility in a verbal interaction.

Through the application of picture mapping in the storytelling activity, children became able to develop their social competence; how to get along with others (Kirmani dan Frieman 1997:39; Zeece, 2009). This competence is closely related with 21st century skills, namely cooperations. In relevance, Read (2005, p.6) states that children should aware of right and responsibility in sharing appliances and tidying them up.

## Conclusion

According to the result, we can conclude that the developed 21st century skills were students' communication and collaborations skills which included: (1) communicating ideas and thoughts with the use of picture map; (2) listening effectively to the story told by the teacher; (3) responding effectively to others during

storytelling sessions; (4) communicating effectively in a bilingual atmosphere, and (5) express willingness to be helpful.

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